

The Cape of Rushes (Cambridge Reading)

1832 MAY

RIO DE JANEIRO 69

(*Note in margin:* Real height 2330) During the time we were on the summit we were either in a cloud or rain. — Whilst passing through the woods, I observed the same fact, which I have mentioned about the interior forests, viz the smallness of the trunks of the trees. — Very few reached (I believe not more than 3 or 4) reached seven feet in circumference: & only one 9^{ft} 7^{inch}. — The Caucovado is notorious for Maroon or run-away slaves; the last time we ascended, we met three most villanous[166] looking ruffians, armed up to the teeth. — they were Maticans or slave-hunters, & receive so much for every man dead or alive whom they may take. — In the former case they only bring down the ears. — A slave, who has since voluntarily delivered himself up, run away from M^r Lennons estate on the Macaè & lived in a cave for two years & a half. — So easy is it in these countries for a man to support himself. — Amongst other things which the anti-abolitionists say, it is asserted that the freed slave would not work. I repeatedly hear of run-away ones having the boldness of working for wages in the neighbourhead of their masters. If they will thus work when there is danger, surely they likewise would when that was removed. — Again the blacks, who have been seized by British men of war, are hired out to different tradesmen for seven years, by which time it is supposed they could support themselves. — I have heard many instances from the masters, that they claim their freedom before the expiration of the time: & set up for themselves. — What will not interest or blind prejudice assert, when defending its unjust power or opinion? —

31st Staid at home; the evenings now soon close in; whilst I am lamenting the northern progress of the sun, everybody in England is rejoiced at[167] it: as yet I am no ways accustomed to this reversed order of things. It sounds very good to hear of fruits only ripening at Christmas. —

June 1st Took a long ride, in order to geologize some of the surrounding hills. — After passing for some time through lanes shaded by hedges of Mimosas, I turned off into a track into the forest. — The woods even at this short distance from the city are as quiet & unfrequented as if a civilized man had never entered them. — The path wound up the hill: at the height of 5 or 6000 feet I enjoyed one of those splendid views, which may be met with on every side of Rio. — At this elevation the landscape has attained its most brilliant tint. — I do not know what epithet such scenery deserves: beautiful is much too tame; every form, every colour is such a complete exaggeration of what one has ever

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